
Public Safety Committee

SB 5270

Brief Description: Concerning a nonoperating advisory board reporting to the state patrol.

Sponsors: Senators Roach, Liias and Benton; by request of Washington State Patrol.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Terminates the advisory board for the Missing and Exploited Children Task Force.
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Hearing Date: 3/17/15

Staff: Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

Background:

In 1999 the Legislature enacted the Teeka Lewis Act which created the Missing and Exploited Children Task Force (MECTF). The MECTF is a multi-agency task force, under the direction of the Washington State Patrol (WSP), focused on identifying, arresting, and convicting those individuals who exploit children. Crimes investigated by the MECTF include Communication With a Minor for Immoral Purposes; Sexual Exploitation of a Minor; Possession of Depictions of Minors Engaged in Sexually Explicit Conduct; and dealing in Depictions of Minors Engaged in Sexually Explicit Conduct. The MECTF is available to provide on-site assistance, case management, and training; works closely with federal, state, and local agencies to accomplish its mission; and is available to assist agencies that do not have the resources or training necessary to investigate crimes against children.

In 1999 an advisory board (Board) for the MECTF was also established. The six-member advisory Board advises the Chief of the WSP on the objectives, conduct, management, and coordination of the various activities of the MECTF. Five members of the Board are appointed by the Chief of the WSP which includes a county prosecuting attorney, a municipal police chief, a county sheriff, a representative of the WSP, and one person representing parents of missing or exploited children. The sixth member is appointed by the Attorney General. Board members serve two-year terms.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Over the years, Board participation was extended to include additional stakeholders such as representatives from federal law enforcement agencies and state social service agencies. In addition, other local and federal agencies have created investigative units over the years which are dedicated to Internet and child exploitation investigations similar to the MECTF. The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Crimes Against Children, Internet Crimes Against Children, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, all have similar duties as what the MECTF Board was originally established to accomplish.

The MECTF Board has not met since 2010.

Summary of Bill:

The MECTF Board is terminated and will cease to exist under the act; however, the MECTF will continue to operate.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.